



## Using the User

### Notions on Literature Promotion in Danish Public Libraries

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# Using the user: Notions on literature promotion in Danish public libraries

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## Introduction

The promotion of literature in public libraries is currently finding new paths to tread all over the western world (Thorhauge, 2002). A working group, appointed by the Danish Ministry of Culture in 2009 has recommended that libraries 1) continue to work with the development of new and qualified promotion activities, 2) select and display materials in surprising ways, and 3) that promotion of literature should take place where users are present (on the web, on the work places, in schools and institutions) (Styrelsen for Bibliotek og Medier, 2010). The above statements show that the concept of literature promotion is subject to discussion in the field of public libraries, at least in a Danish context. This paper seeks to contribute to and to qualify this discussion. One of the problems connected to the question about and practice of literature promotion is its lack of theoretical basis. Or rather that the theoretical basic of literature promotion can be seen as a mixed theoretical understanding influenced by communication theory, learning theory, speech act theory, reception theory among others (Grøn, 2010). This has to do with the fact, that literature promotion is a many layered concept, which covers activities from acquisition and classification over arrangement and exhibition to more outwards events such as book talks and reading clubs.

The aim of this paper is to contribute to the establishment of a *theoretical* and *empirically* based understanding of literature promotion and its practice in Danish public libraries. Efforts to promote literature in libraries has traditionally been linked to a humanistic enlightenment rationale (Emerek, 2001; Skot-Hansen, 1999; Ørom, 1993) where the reading of literature supposedly would contribute to broaden citizens' horizons, enhance readers' readiness for change and strengthen their ability to engage in a modern society. Today several other rationales and logics for promotion of culture are discussed, such as instrumental, experience, expressive and economic logics or rationales (Skot-Hansen, 2005; Belfiore, 2004; Jensen, 2003).

In a recent survey on literature promotion in Danish public libraries Grøn (Grøn, 2010) analysis this development by means of 3 phases: a confirmative phase, where the library was strongly connected to the agenda of the Enlightenment project; a reformative phase, which was dominated by a user rationale defining the library as a self-service institution, and the current performative phase where more active and formative approaches to literature promotion can be located, approaches that are defined by an experience rationale (Grøn, 2010). This paper can be seen as a further digging into the concept of literature promotion. More specifically we aim to encircle the understanding of the content and purpose of literature promotion by identifying different notions on what the purpose

and effects of literature promotion might be among managers and promoters of literature in the local libraries.

The identification of underlying logics present among politicians, government officials, managers and librarians/promoters of literature, is an important part of creating an understanding of literature promotion in Danish libraries. In this paper, however we want to go further than including policy rationales in the discussion of literature promotion. We also want to take into account the role professional logics and trends can play in the understanding of literature promotion. The term professional logic points at the institutional norms and consensus which can be identified at Danish libraries regarding core activities, user orientation and the relation between users and professionals (Jochumsen & Hvenegaard Rasmussen, 2006a). Finally we want to analyse the role norms, such as visibility and a consistent customer orientation has on how promotion of literature is articulated in libraries today. The demands for visibility and customer orientation can be linked to the concept of new public management (NPM), which acts as a condition for all activities in the public sector to day. NPM is a rationale or even a philosophy concerned with improving the efficiency of the public sector through the means of the market (Klausen, 2001). In this context however only the institutionalized norms concerning the libraries' visibility and customer orientation is used, as promotional activities in libraries are not directly linked to means of efficiency.

Analyzing notions on literature promotion must take both the actual promoters and their library managers into account. Thus this paper asks the following questions:

- What notions on the purpose and effects of literature promotion can be identified among promoters of literature and managers in libraries?
- How can these notions be understood in relation to policy, public management and profession?

## **Methods and theoretical basis**

Our “unit of analysis” is the notions on promotion of literature as it takes place in three large public libraries. Thus this paper does not intend to point to best practices concerning the promotion of literature. If one should wish to study the promotion of literature itself, the space and strategies should be investigated. This paper focuses solely on the spoken accounts given by professionals and managers in the field. For a thorough analysis of the promotion itself we refer to Grøn (2010).

Methodologically the study is carried out through analysis of interviews conducted with central actors in the field. We have conducted 5 interviews with librarians (2), other academic library staff (2) and library managers (3) during the fall 2010. This has been done in order to identify the notions that are present among professionals and managers in the field. The interviews have been carried out in three Danish county libraries (A, B, C). County libraries are large public libraries who act as county libraries when it comes to *“tasks aimed at a regional co-ordination within a defined geographical area and at strengthening professional skills in the libraries”* (Act Regarding Library

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Services, 2000). County libraries has been selected due to the fact that large libraries have the size and the means to focus more intensive on literature promotion to the point where several of them has created jobs almost solely concerned with promotion of literature. Our theoretical basis is developed and explained in more detail below.

### **Analytical framework**

The basic premise for the analysis is that three interrelated issues interact with the understanding of the purpose of literature promotion in public libraries. The three issues are cultural policy and logics of arts advocacy (Policy), issues related to professional logics and trends in literature promotion (Profession) and institutionalized logics of New Public Management, specifically the focus on measurement and visibility of the library (Public Management). The relation between issues and notions can be understood as illustrated in the model below.



### **P for Policy: Cultural policy and logics in arts advocacy**

Concerning the first point, cultural policy and the logics of arts advocacy, we will study how the statements produced in relation to our interviews can be understood in the light of the prevailing rationales in cultural policy in general and library and literature policies in particular. As we will show further on, cultural policy rationales have a close relationship with the library professionals understanding of how and why their work should be done.

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The development of cultural policy in Denmark is usually understood through the concept of rationales. In two influential articles, Skot-Hansen has argued that cultural policy since the 1960s has developed from a humanistic rationale as the driven argument, over a sociological rationale to the emerging of an instrumental rationale in the 80s (Skot-Hansen, 1999, 2005). In Skot-Hansens latest model (Skot-Hansen, 2006) she refines her own theory and creates an understanding of cultural policy where all guidelines and activities serves a purpose and therefore can be seen as instrumental. Nevertheless new concepts have emerged in the cultural sector, i. e. experience and entertainment which transform the cultural policy and thus the literature promotion in the direction of more user involvement and user acknowledgement. A similar understanding can be found in the work by Joli Jensen (2003) on arts advocacy. Jensen introduces the concept of instrumental logic versus expressive logic and connects it to the concept of aesthetic experiences. According to Jensen the instrumental logic is closely connected to a traditional, elitist and excluding approach to art advocacy, with a clear distinction between “good” and “bad” culture. Arts advocacy with focus on an expressive logic, on the other hand, is defined by tolerance and inclusiveness both regarding forms of culture, types of aesthetic experiences and regarding participants.

Library and literature policy is often being implemented at an institutional level through guidelines published in publications from the Danish Agency for Library and Media. In recent rapports on library service (Styrelsen for Bibliotek og Medier, 2008, 2010) the above mentioned tendencies regarding rationales and logics can be retrieved. Thus in a rapport on the role of the public libraries in a knowledge society published in 2010 (Folkebibliotekerne i videnssamfundet, 2010) the library as institution is viewed as a central player in the development of the society at large, both as a provider of information but also as an institution where information is organised according to quality, diversity and actuality. The library is still being characterized as a provider of enlightenment, education and cultural activity, but with consideration of the cultural diversity and equality which characterizes the late modern society. Additional promotion is emphasized as a core activity for libraries and the rapport encourages the libraries to develop new and different promotion strategies which on the one hand appeal to citizens and on the other hand motivated users to lifelong learning. The account of the library in the knowledge society is followed by a model, which covers all potential activities carried out in the library. In the model concepts as learning, experience, creation and participation constitutes the definition of the late modern library (ibid. p. 48).

### **P for Profession: Professional logics and trends in literature promotion**

The librarian profession has been analyzed and described several places. Some researchers have focused on the stereotype (Radford & Radford, 2003) others on the library profession (Elbeshausen & Schreiber, 2006). In our view the professions in libraries necessarily have some kind of influence on the notions on literature promotion. This can relate to current trends (such as the influence of Reader Development (van Riel & Fowler, 1996)), mimetic processes (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991) and professional identities. We have interviewed both managers, librarians and literature professionals who all work with the promotion on literature in different ways and on different levels. Thus we cannot identify a coherent professional identity, but even though not all of our interviewees are librarians, they display quite a homogenous attitude towards users, that is closely

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connected to what has been described as characteristic for librarians. During the last 30 years, librarian's orientation towards their users' needs and preferences has evolved and has gradually become institutionalized. For instance, Jochumsen & Hvenegaard (2006b) analyze Danish public library periodicals from 1964 up until today. They show that among librarians, a certain discourse and attitude towards users has evolved from an unambiguous (elitist) concept of quality to be presented to users towards a wish to get in touch with the public on their terms (a sort of cultural democracy). The latter attitude became consolidated during the 1990s and forward. Accordingly, by now no one in their right mind would question that public libraries should reflect their users' preferences and needs.

A recent survey done by Grøn (2010) concerning trends in current literature promotion identifies activities which is characterised by opposed tendencies. Literature promotion at Danish public libraries is thus dominated by a demand oriented marked rationale, where users satisfaction serves as one of the most important arguments and goals. At the same time a double experience rationale can be identified, that concerns both promotion *of* experiences (exchange and articulation of reading experiences) and promotion *as* experience (user involving performative promotion) (Grøn, 2010, p. 228). This experience trend in literature promotion is both connected to a marked orientation related to an economical rationale, where libraries must act on the same terms as other players on the culture market and on the same time connected to a user orientation related to a expressive rationale, where users literature preferences are acknowledged and supported.

#### **P for Public management: Customer orientation and visibility**

As argued libraries are subjected to political and administrative demands that go further than rationales of cultural policies. Besides focusing on education, enlightenment and experience rationales, libraries must tend to the visibility, competition and performance measurements in order to be successful today. These demands are in different ways related to the concept of New Public Management, but can also be viewed as general demands in the late modern society (Jochumsen & Hvenegaard Rasmussen, 2006b; Kann-Christensen & Andersen, 2009; Buschman, 2003).

NPM is based on a belief that competition among institutions will improve the quality of the services they provide. Consequently public libraries become subject to measurement, evaluation, comparison, etc. The underlying intent of these efforts is to make production and use of resources in the public sector more controllable, legitimate and transparent (Jarlov & Melander, 2005). As stated above, the NPM has influenced the profession in different ways. But also the library as an institution has changed due to the influence of NPM. Thus the art of performance measurement, marketing and organizational development are everyday activities in contemporary libraries.

#### **Models will be models**

The three issues which constitute our analytic framework are interrelated and partly overlapping. The model established here serves mainly as a structuring tool in our analysis of the empirical material. In the following analysis we will include concepts and understandings from the theoretical

framework at large according to the themes and findings in the empirical material without maintaining the structure of the model.

Working with the empirical material we have identified three lines of arguments relating to the purpose and effects of literature promotion. Thus we have categorized the statements according to how library promoters and managers relate to who should benefit from the promotional activities. Thus it is the identified patterns in the interviews that structure the following analysis.

The first part of the analysis relate to notions on how and what *the library users* benefit from literature promotion. The second part relate to notions on how *the library as an institution* benefit from promotional activities (in form of legitimacy). The last part of the analysis points to a “mystery”, which we have not solved in this paper, but which may give direction to future research. The concept of mystery derives from Alvesson and Kärreman and points at an analysis situation where empirical material doesn’t correspond with the expectations (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2005). The mystery relates to notions on what *the librarians themselves* gain from the promotional activities they perform.

Thus what we are interested in, in this part of the paper is how informants argue for literature promotion and what effects are put forward in the interviews. We then try to understand these arguments according to our analytical framework (consisting of the three issues: Policy, Public management and Profession) presented above.

### **Library users**

In the analysis of the arguments put forward by both librarians/promoters and managers regarding the purpose and effects of literature promotion one can identify statements connected to a classic enlightenment rationale as well as statements connected to an experience rationale. When asked about the purpose of literature promotion, the informants first and foremost points at the experience of the library users.

*The most important for me is not that people learn something about literature. The most important is that they have had a good and pleasant experience, and also that they feel that they themselves has been in focus (C3).*

The focus on experience can be found in many different promotion strategies, but becomes very explicit in connection to literature promotion events like book cafes where books are presented according to a theme and followed by food, music, wine or other extra features which together creates a total experience that stimulates several senses.

*I think it is very important to work on creating an atmosphere. I do not think is it sufficient any more just to talk about a book in front of readers. I think it is important to give people an experience and to do so you have to add something extra (B2).*



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The concept of experiences runs through all the interviews as a mantra of literature promotion in an experience society. The focus on experiences is both a result of an assumption among librarians and promoters about users demand for experiences and of an actual competition among libraries and between libraries and other cultural institutions.

*Of course we compare ourselves with other libraries that make extremely interesting new services and we do not want to be left behind. (B2)*

The focus on experiences is thus both a result of trends in literature promotion in other libraries (and one could add, other cultural institutions) and related to a feeling of necessity due to the general demand for experiences in these years.

But paying attention to experiences is not only a way of drawing people's attention to the library. The argument goes further when asked what effect the literature promotion supposedly has on the users:

*I hope that people leave the library enriched and with a broader horizon (...) and they should also feel very well welcomed. Kindly treaded, respected and understood. [They should feel] that people here at the library engage in listening to them and talking with them. (B1)*

*[Users] should have a cultural experience and its fine if [they] leave the library more educated. (C1)*

In the two statements one can both identify the enlightenment rationale, where cultural activities are seen as means in a process which has as its primary purpose to educate people and lift their life condition, and an experience rationale where users are recognised and respected without any attempt at guiding them in a particular direction. Literature promotion is here not seen as a means to promote literature, but as a means to bring the users in the centre of the event i.e. in debates. *You should meet people at their own level* as one of the informants express it (C3).

One of the main differences between the two rationales in relation to literature promotion has to do with how and with what kind of literature people should have stimulating experiences. Experiences are not to be understood as entertaining empty calories compared to educating nutritious fibres. Rather the experience oriented discourse in public libraries is focused on precisely the meaning of the concept as it is defined in relation to aesthetic experiences and expressive logic. Here experience is characterised as something extraordinary, as something which activates feelings and emotions and which somehow leaves the user changed (Balling, 2009; Dewey, 1934; Grøn, 2010; Jensen, 2003; Shusterman, 1999). The idea of literature promotion in an experience discourse is thus not to promote a certain kind of literature, but to provide settings for a variety of experiences. This argument can also be found among the informants:



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*The idea of literature promotion is to give people experiences they didn't expect. And to get people attached so much to the library that they seek things here they would otherwise not get to know. (A2)*

*The purpose is to open people's eyes, and I don't only mean in relation to fine literature, but to the diversity which exists in literature. (B1)*

A trend among Danish public libraries is to create library clubs or event club. Through membership of the club the members get special offers and exclusive invitations to certain events. The concept of library clubs is closely connected to the above statements on recognition and respect of the user. When asked what difference it makes for the members other than getting access to special events, the answer is: *Hopefully in time they will come to feel a bit selected (C3)* and *We are something special. We are not only users (A2)*. The purpose of the library clubs is twofold. It is both a result of the above mentioned recognition of library users which can be traced to the experience rationale, but it also serves the purpose to secure sufficient audiences to the events which the library arranges. This purpose is further discussed below.

Even though the experience rationale is well represented in the interviews traces of the more classic enlightenment rationale can be identified in the interviews. Both in form of a “staircase” thinking (Duelund, 1995), where people are presented for other types of literature than their own preferred kind and as statements which clearly distinguishes between good and bad literature. The first example points in the direction of a classic cultural strategy, where people, when in the library, are introduced to something else:

*You make special events and then you can sneak other things in (...) When people are hooked, we can sneak other things in (A2).*

The strategy here is not to stop people from reading their preferred type of literature, but to introduce readers to titles outside the mainstream literature. Another example shows statements which pinpoint some of the arguments from the old discussion on literature quality and the role of the librarian. Should the librarians take a stand when it comes to buying and promoting “bad” literature?

*We have to have the courage to take a stand, to say to a user: “It's not bad what you like to read. We would just like to show you something else”. We have also Margit Sandemo, to my horror. And that is really bad. It is really crap. And people love it. (B1)*

Even though the interviewee expresses obligingness towards user's literature preferences, the acknowledgement clearly has a limit. The interviewee articulates an attitude towards literature and quality which do not correspond with the expressive logic and which therefore is expressed but not performed in practise. The quality discussion which is approached here is more or less absent in

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most of the interviews. The primary focus on user's experiences has to some extent eliminated the discussion on quality. Instead acknowledgement and diversity is being viewed as important points of orientation when it comes to the purpose of literature promotion. One could say that the old vertical staircase thinking has been followed by a horizontal manifold cultural orientation as ideal.

### **Recognition and the frosting on the cake**

Analysing the empirical material we have identified two central notions in relation to the purpose and effect of literature promotion in relation to users. Throughout the material statements related to recognition as a positive and necessary approach towards users can be found:

*As we all know people want to participate, they like to be allowed to express their opinion. They also want to engage in another person, who respects their opinion. They don't want a stern librarian to hit them in the head and tell them that it is not okay that they don't understand Dostoevsky (C3).*

The notion on recognition of the user is to a large extent connected to a new librarian identity, where the librarian and the user are understood as equal persons (Balling, Henrichsen, Skouvig, 2008, Johannsen, 2009). The notion on literature promotion is therefore very focused not on the literature in question, but in the activity, the dialogue, the social event, which all have as its core purpose to satisfy the user.

The other central notion which can be identified in the empirical material is the idea about "something extra". This notion is closely connected to experience as one of the core concepts in literature promotion. Several statements relates to the necessity of bringing something extra to activities and events in the literature promotion. It is no longer enough to present literature in front of an audience. The assumption manifest in the interviews goes in the direction of a demand for music, food, and tea on the pot and more performative promotions strategies (see also Grøn, 2010).

### **Legitimacy**

Analyzing the interviews a group of statements was identified which pointed towards the benefits for the library itself. The library as an institution in society and the legitimacy of this institution played a role in the interviews with both managers and professionals. This paragraph discusses the statements made regarding the libraries legitimacy and understanding of the users. The legitimacy of the library today is closely (but not solely) connected to NPM, as we will show in the following. The statements in this category follow two lines of arguments (notions).

The first line of arguments relate to statements on what a library is, what users, librarians and politicians expect from the library. These statements are different compared to the following group of statements, because they relate to an implicit consensus of what the library is, and what role literature promotion plays accordingly. The second line of arguments regards the demands the library is subjected to regarding measurement of the libraries activities. This relates explicitly to the expectations and wishes of the libraries principals in the municipality, but it also relates to the

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professional satisfaction feeling of personal legitimacy of the librarians. This line considers the need for the library to be visible in the local society.

#### Literature promotion as a core activity

It is not surprising that librarians/literature promoters as well as managers relate efforts to promote literature with the role of the library in society, the purpose and legitimacy of the library. Literature promotion is characterized as a core activity by several of the interviewed. When asked why they engage in literature promotional activities the interviewees put forward these statements:

*The easiest and the most boring answer is that this is something we have to do. It's the core activity Whooo. (B2)*

*I think the necessity is situated in people's expectations. I hope people expect us to promote literature. (B2)*

*Fiction is not the type that has the highest lending rates. But it is what people think is our core activity, to borrow novels. (B1)*

The above statements point towards a notion that literature promotion is an essential activity. There is no explicit regulative basis in the Act regarding library services that libraries should promote literature, but the implicit understanding of this necessity in the statements above is supported by many policy documents. The latest example is the report on the public libraries in the knowledge society (Styrelsen for Bibliotek og Medier, 2010). Several places, this report equals "traditional core activities" with literature promotion (see i.e. p. 7-8 and p. 51-53). This point towards a notion on literature promotion as something, that rests deeply in the self understanding of the institution. This is present on both the political and the practical level.

What's interesting is the way the above statements are put forward. The first interviewee somehow feels she has to distance herself from the concept of core activity. The use of "whooh" and the characteristic "boring" indicates that literature promotion itself has a higher value than just some municipal boring core activity. This is linked to a notion on the legitimacy of literature promotion in libraries that goes beyond the political. It has an exciting value in itself. The next two statements connect the legitimacy of literature promotion to the users' expectations. It is about what a library should do and what it is. And if the users think that literature promotion is the core activity, then it (automatically) becomes the core activity. This focus on the users is present several places in the empirical material. And as we will show in the following the users are present everywhere in the notions on the legitimacy of literature promotion in libraries.

#### Quantity as quality

In the following we discuss the interviewees' statements regarding quantitative measurements. One statement shows that the link between funding and lending rates is experienced as very close.

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*We have had a specific objective in our contract regarding higher lending rates. ... Our acquisition policy reflected this. We bought books so there wouldn't be too long waiting time. We consciously fed the patrons with books, so they took out as many as possible. That's what gives us the money. This is what we are rated upon. Very much so, and high visiting rates.(A1)*

Increased lending rates are emphasized as an effect of good literature promotion. The statement shows how certain efforts can increase the lending rates. This very explicit focus on performance measurement can be viewed as a result of the strong NPM influence in the libraries (Adcroft & Willis, 2005). In the statement above it is directly linked to the library's funding. The library is not funded according to measurements of how good the library is at recognizing what role they can play in citizen's life at a given time, but solely on a quantitative measure (Kann-Christensen & Andersen, 2009). But librarians and literature promoters also display a more implicit NPM-stance. An example of this is the answers to the question on best and worst experiences with literature promotion activities.

*There have to be people attending. It's best if there are lots of people coming. I might as well be honest and say so. It's no use to put an event together if only 7 people attend (B2)*

*If I dig deep [into my self] the criterion for success is that there must be people attending. The result must be able to measure up against the efforts. I don't want to put together something if only three people attend (C3)*

*The worst is if nobody shows up. That ruins my mood (A2)*

Even though the number of people varies in the above statements, the overall criterion for success regarding literary events in the library is the number of people attending. It is noticeable that two of the three promoters of literature incorporate a distance towards their own statement. It is obviously not *comme il faut* to display this quantitative perspective on promotional activities. Nevertheless, it seems that the number of people attending the literary events and the number of members in the library clubs are very present in the interviews. This quantitative emphasis points towards a strong customer orientation or customer satisfaction view (Kann-Christensen & Andersen, 2009, Jochumsen & Hvenegaard Rasmussen, 2006b, Johannsen, 2010). The absence of users means that something has been done wrong. This can be either a wrong concept or lack of marketing. No where in the interviews can it be identified that it is the customers that are wrong (in not attending). The number of attendees /members becomes synonymous with the quality of the concept or event. The arguments made for these viewpoints are twofold.

The first argument regards the visibility of the library. Events market the library, and the more people who attend the more visible the library are to other potential customers. Literature promotion becomes a means to improve the library's visibility. Actually the only thing that can make an

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otherwise poorly visited event a success is if it makes the library make the news. If the media reports from the event it is also a success.

*When we did the speed-lit event, which is a variety of speed dating 22 people attended. [...] that's not a lot, but when you think about that the news reported live from the event [...] and all the major newspapers wrote about speed dating at our library, that made up for it; because we had a lot of publicity (C3)*

The events brand the library as a place where something is happening. This is important both in relation to politicians and to present and potential users. This reflects an assumption that if the library is visible, it will attract more users and thus gain more legitimacy. A variant of this line of thinking is put forward by interviewees that link the quantity of users to a concern for how the taxpayers money are spend. The promotional activities must appeal to a broad audience; many citizens should benefit from the library.

In other words what benefits does literature promotion have for the overall legitimacy of the library? The answer to this question is closely related to a certain notion of users as customers that needs to be satisfied. Users become a means to legitimize the library to politicians who will evaluate the library in economic terms (performance measurement). In other words, it becomes imperative for libraries to be able to document that they have satisfied users and that they strive to make themselves visible to all potential customers. Thus quantitative performance measurement plays a role when it comes to understanding the library professional notions on the purpose and effects of literature promotion.

### The limits of user orientation

The above paragraphs show a very distinct focus on the user, where the user on the one hand is viewed as someone which should be acknowledged and receive good service. On the other hand the user is used as a means to legitimize the library in different ways. Consequently the user is constructed as customer. However, this user focus seems to go hand in hand with a constant emphasis on the promoters own experiences, tastes and opinions. This distinct self interest can be categorized according to opinions about literature (the content) and opinions about how to promote the literature (means to promote content).

*I have chosen to take my own top 5 or top 3. My favourite books, and then it's just so nice to see people almost fight over them (on book talks) (A2).*

This statement is an example of how the promoters' own taste determines the books selected for promoted. The justification given in this statement is quite weak. Thus the quality of the event is connected to users accept and interest in the promoters personal taste ("it's just so nice"). Nowhere in the interviews justifications for personal taste is given. This could indicate that the personal taste and reading pleasure of the promoter has a role to play in literature promotion (a point we shall

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return to shortly). The interviewees use the same kind of arguments (their own preferences) when asked about promotion activities:

*I know from my self, I think it becomes a little more interesting when there is “something extra” (on literary events with music and food)(B2)*

If the qualitative gauge comes from personal gut feelings or personal taste, as a consequence one could assume that the promotion primarily will target users that are similar to the promoters, both regarding the preferences in literature and regarding promotional activities. This is the mystery. The user has clearly tremendous importance when it comes to the purpose of literature promotion. But apparently – when it comes to what and how to promote, the librarians and promoters use themselves as a point of reference. Thus the user orientation has its limits, which becomes very clear in the following statement:

*I think it is very important to give people an experience, both because it makes it more fun for us to work with it, and also because it’s something we are good at and it’s is something we should be good at in order to make people come at the library (B2)*

This last statement illustrates the point, that experience oriented literature promotion serves several purposes besides the user’s benefits. Besides pointing at the library as a professional culture institution, which must be able to deliver a certain product of a certain quality in order to legitimize its own existence, the personal job satisfaction is underlined as central part of the experience and user oriented promotion strategy.

## Concluding discussion

The main conclusion of the empirical study presented in this paper is that several notions on literature promotion can be identified among promoters and managers at Danish public libraries. Still one argument seems to bind the notions together in an overall notion, namely the argument of the user. The user is present at all times. But the user argument goes in different directions i.e. recognition and experience of the user, legitimacy through popularity, and job satisfaction of the promoters when events draw a crowd.

The model we presented constitutes our hypothesis and our point of orientation according to which the three perspectives (Policy, Profession, and Public management) colour notions on literature promotion. The three perspectives reveal different kinds of user orientation or different ways the user is used as argument. Thus we can argue that the user is used in order to:

- meet political guidelines and rationales
- legitimize the library as institution
- satisfy personal professional needs

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The three perspectives can also be viewed according to motivation factors. Klausen (2001) distinguishes between 3 motivational logics in the public sector. Obligation (I do so because I am obliged to), Use (what's in it for me) and Pleasure (I do so because I want to). Using these three factors, the notions on the purpose and effects of literature promotion can be viewed as a mix of these three.

- Obligation: The raison d'être of the library is promotion of culture. And cultural promotion needs users to promote for. Several employees point to the fact that literature promotion is a core activity in public libraries.
- Use: The library is being measured on amount of visitors and users. When many users participate in different kinds of promotion, it legitimizes the role of the library. Viewed this way literature promotion is an activity that is carried out because it generates good performance figures.
- Pleasure: The users work as an argument for the personal pleasure of reading and the job satisfaction among promoters.

The overall notion about user orientation in Danish public libraries comes thus in many shapes and support many functions and arguments. The analysis has showed that arguments connected to users and user's satisfaction serves issues connected to policy (obligation), public management (use) and profession (pleasure).

Future research (which we hope to undertake) should investigate the role of the last point. Firstly the difference between literary promoters, librarians and managers should be analyzed and secondly the mystery of the use of personal taste and the focus on job satisfaction should be investigated in more detail.

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